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vail, there plague commits its greatest ravages. Hence the remedy becomes largely a social question.

Entirely apart from its medical aspects, which are here readily intelligible even to the layman, the study of plague must prove decidedly fascinating to anyone at all interested in social, political or economic problems. A topical table of contents, a full index and numerous excellent charts and diagrams add greatly to the value of the book.

University of Pennsylvania.

WALTER SHELDON TOWER.

Smith, J. Russell. *The Story of Iron and Steel.* Pp. xi, 193. Price, 75 cents. New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1908.

Complete in detail, clear and forceful in diction, with few technical terms, this book may truthfully be described as the first satisfactory popular history of the world's greatest industry. Although of small compass this volume gives what larger volumes have failed to do—namely, an intelligent, readable presentation of the broad aspects of iron and steel making, which are of interest to the average man. It discusses not only the purely technical development from a historical standpoint, but also the no less important economic and commercial results accompanying this development.

The chapters deal in order with iron ores and their formation; the early history of iron; the beginning of modern iron-making and its introduction into America; the anthracite epoch; the coke epoch; the leadership of Great Britain in the nineteenth century; the coming of the age of steel; the supremacy of the United States; consolidation and combination in production; and the ore and steel supply of the future.

The last two phases of the subject have called forth the presentation of essentially new views. In the author's opinion the steel trust is based on possession of the best ore and is a secure monopoly only in so far as it controls the most important sources of raw materials. Certain independent concerns, favored by location may be regarded as benefiting from the formation of the trust because of the consequent price control. The security of the trust, moreover, depends on a continuation of present processes of iron and steel manufacture as illustrated by the obvious conclusion that a trust formed on the use of anthracite coal would have perished unless it could have changed its basis early in the succeeding coke epoch. Without radical changes in technical processes the supremacy of the trust is likely to increase as the independent supplies of raw material are exhausted. The revolutionary change of technical process is, however, not such a remote possibility after all. The perfection of the electric furnace to such a degree that it will become an important industrial factor, and the necessity of turning to ore supplies now considered inferior or impossible to adapt to existing processes, unquestionably mean vast changes in the future. Just what these changes will be is, of course, a speculative matter, but the discussion of them, in so far as is possible, forms one of the most interesting parts of this very instructive book.

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WALTER SHELDON TOWER.